

Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

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SUBJ: PMAC ISSUES PROCLAMATION ON METCHA

1. GOVT CONTROLLED MEDIA OF DEC 18 CARRY SUMMARY OF NEW PMAC PROCLAMATION OF ZEMETCHA PARTICIPATION. DECREE EXEMPTS ZEMETCHA STUDENTS WHO HAVE NOT FULFILLED THEIR SERVICE OBLIGATIONS FROM LAWSUITS AND PUNISHMENTS (OTHER THAN FOR PERSONAL MISDEEDS) ARISING FROM THEIR SERVICE OF FAILURE TO COMPLETE THEIR SERVICE. STUDENT CAMPAGINERS IN JAIL WILL HAVE REMAINING JAIL TERMS SUSPENDED, FINES WILL BE REFUNDED AND DISMISSAL FROM CAMPAIGN FOR WHATEVER REASON WILL BE RESCINDED. ALL CASES AGAINST CAMPAIGN PARTICIPANTS PENDING IN COURT, POLICE STATIONS, OR OTHER GOVT ORGANIZATIONS ARE SUSPENDED. PROCLAMATION ALSO EXEMPTS PARTICIPANTS FROM ANY PUNISHMENT FOR HAVING ILLEGALLY LEFT THE COUNTRY TO AVOID ZEMETCHA SERVICE.

2. ALL CAMPAIGN PARTICIPANTS EXEMPTED BY THIS DECREE WILL BE REQUIRED TO FULFILL THEIR NATIONAL OBLIGATION ON THE BASIS OF A DIRECTIVE TO BE ISSUED BY CAMPAIGN HQ'S WHICH SPECIFIES CONDITIONS AND TIME LIMIT

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OF SERVICE. ALL CAMPAIGN PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE

CERTIFICATES FROM CAMPAIGN HQ'S. THOSE WHO REMAINED AT THEIR ASSIGNED POSTS FOR CAMPAIGN DUTY WILL, HOWEVER, BE GIVEN CERTIFICATES FOR "PRIORITY OF OPPORTUNITY."

3. PROCLAMATION NOTED THAT SOME PARTICIPANTS HAVE WITHDRAWN FROM THEIR ASSIGNMENT BUT THAT "THE MAJORITY HAVE CONTINUED TO SERVE THE ETHIOPIAN MASSES WITH ENTHUSIASM, DEVOTION AND DEDICATION." STATEMENT ADMITS THAT MISTAKES HAVE BEEN MADE BY PARTICIPANTS BUT ATTRIBUTES THIS TO FREQUENTLY OVERZEALOUSNESS IN ADVANCING THE CAUSE OF THE REVOLUTION. DECREE UNDERSCORES THE CONTINUING IMPORTANCE OF ZEMETCHA FOR INCULCATING POLITICAL AWARENESS AMONG THE PEOPLE AND FOR LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. STATEMENT CLOSED BY URGING CAMPAIGN PARTICIPANTS TO PURSUE THEIR DUTIES VIGOROUSLY UNTIL THE LOFTY AIMS OF THE REVOLUTION ARE ATTAINED.

4. IN ADDITION TO CONCESSIONS CONTAINED IN THE PROCLAMATION, WE HAVE HEARD THAT NUMEROUS OTHER RESTRICTIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, ON SMOKING, TRAVEL, TYPE OF CLOTHING, ETC., WILL BE LIFTED.

5. IN INTERVIEW BROADCAST BY RADIO ETHIOPIA, ZEMETCHA CIVILIAN COORDINATORS DRS. ASFAU DESTA AND HAILE-MICHAEL ATTRIBUTED ZEMETCHA PROBLEMS TO: (A) LACK OF TRANSPORTATION, PARTICULARLY FOR FOOD, (2) INSECURITY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, (3) ZEMACH BECOMING "HOMESICK". COORDINATORS ALSO SAID THAT 25 PERCENT OF ZEMETACH HAVE LEFT THEIR STATIONS, IN PART BECAUSE OF ORGANIZED CAMPAIGN BY REACTIONARIES WHO PASS OUT LEAFLETS ENCOURAGING THEM TO DO SO.

COMMENT: PROCLAMATION CONTAINS SOME RATHER SURPRISING OFFICIAL ADMISSIONS OF ERRORS AND MISMANAGEMENT BUT NOTHING THAT WAS NOT GENERAL KNOWLEDGE. IN VIEW OF REPORT WHICH WE HAD RECEIVED FROM CAMPAIGN HQ'S THAT 30,000 STUDENTS (OUT OF 57,000 TOTAL) ABANDONED THE CAMPAIGN, GOVT CLEARLY HAD TO MAKE CONCESSIONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN ORDER TO KEEP ZEMETCHA ALIVE. INDICATIONS FROM THIS PROCLAMATION AND THE RECENT PROCLAMATION ON PEASANT ASSOCIATIONS ARE THAT GOVT INTENDS TO CONTINUE ZEMETCHA AND HAVE IN PLAY SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES. THIS MAY BE DIFFICULT, HOWEVER, SINCE REPORTS REACHING US FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE INDICATE THAT MOST REMAINING ZEMETCHA STUDENTS HAVE CONGREGATED IN LARGER CITIES BECAUSE OF PEASANT OPPOSITION TO THEM.

END COMMENT.

HUMMEL

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